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ABSTRACT

Proposing the use of a single comprehensive communications model, the Circles of Context Model, for all forms of communication, this paper shows how the model can be used to identify different kinds of criticism of the television comedy series "All in the Family" and the ways in which that criticism shifted during the show's nine-year run. Applying the model to "All in the Family," the paper uses an overview essay by critic Richard Adler at the beginning of his anthology, "All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal." Adler's essay addresses the cultural, historical, and institutional contexts of the program, taking into account the Vietnam War period, the situation at CBS, and the rise of producer Norman Lear. Continuing with the model as a frame of reference, the paper follows Adler's movement from the model's outer to inner circles of context and across the time span of the series' development, systematically traveling through the history of the series. The paper then recommends the use of the contextual model to survey larger groups of criticism that center on particular series, programs, or creative forces in television, and examines shifts in focus of media critics, journalists, and scholarly researchers over time. The conclusion of the paper reiterates the model's effectiveness in situating a communicative act in a specific time and place, as well as in describing interpretive acts that come long after the original encoding. The model is included, and 42 footnotes are appended. (NKA)

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ALL IN THE FAMILY IN CONTEXT:

A UNIFIED MODEL OF MEDIA STUDIES APPLIED TO TELEVISION CRITICISM

December 2, 1985

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Introduction

In the last two decades physicists have struggled to realize Einstein's goal of a unified theory to encompass twentieth century discoveries in quantum physics and relativity theory. After surveying a range of communication models used in mass communication research over the past thirty years, communications scholars Denis McQuail and Sven Windahl come out against such a quest in mass communication studies. A single comprehensive model, a model that is "ultimate or definitive... embracing all sub-processes in single view, is neither possible or desirable," according to McQuail and Windahl.¹ They argue rather for a plurality of models and model-making processes designed to clarify new ideas and theories and organize current research findings.²

To some degree, all models are reductionist. But common frameworks are useful, especially in new fields of inquiry. From McQuail and Windahl's own survey, it is clear that such a framework is provided by the Shannon-Weaver information theory model. It is the conceptual starting point for Lasswell, Osgood and Schramm, Westley and MacLean, Maletzke and most of the others discussed by McQuail and Windahl in their book.³

Before establishing the validity of a unified, comprehensive model for communication research, an even more fundamental question must be posed. Why make models at all? Do they really help us understand anything as complex as the communication process?

My own positive view toward model building comes from teaching in English, Communication, Radio-Television-Film and Theater Arts departments. Most of these departments engaged in debates, sometimes

flaring into battles, over what the curriculum should be and where research money should go. These often bitter struggles pivoted around the question of what constituted valid approaches to media studies.

It became clear to me that at least some of the mistrust and hostility that thwarts communication in communication departments comes from a language problem. People would be talking about related things--for example, what different academic language communities variously refer to as myth structures, ideological constructs, cultural signifiers or fantasy themes--but doing so from postures of attack and defense that obscured rather than clarified their commonality of interest. Semioticians, rhetoricians and sociologists do have things to say to each other if they step back for a moment to recognize the common space they inhabit and listen to each other.

A single communications model is, in this sense, a kind of pidgin, a lingua franca everyone can speak, provisionally at least, to get a better perspective on the study of communication over the last 2000 years. The tapping of common and special resources becomes increasingly important as scholars move into areas in which traditional human symbolic exchange has been radically affected by evolving communication technologies.

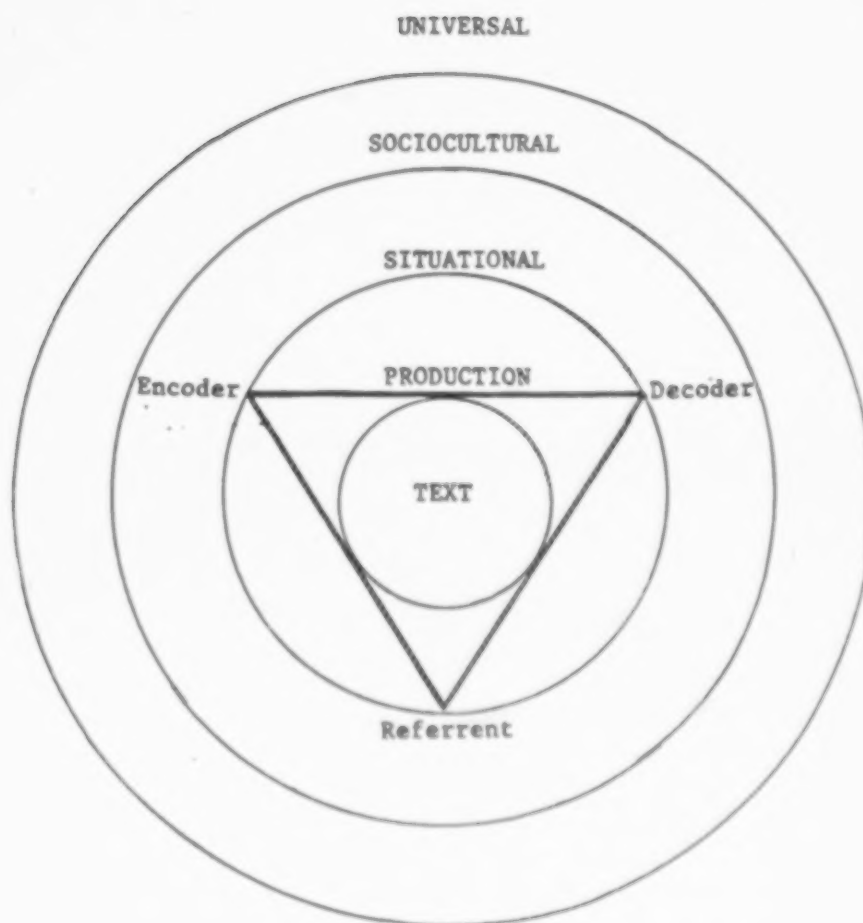
I therefore propose, despite the reservations of those whose opinions I respect, a single comprehensive communications model. The model can be applied to 1) teaching, 2) charting the work of individual critics and pieces of criticism, 3) investigating bodies of criticism, and 4) tracing major shifts in critical methodology and terminology.

I will take a single television series, All in the Family (1971-79), and show how the model can be used to identify different kinds of criticism written about the show and the ways in which that criticism shifted over the show's nine-year run.⁴ The model's usefulness in charting broader currents in literary criticism, film studies, and the electronic media will be explored in the final section of the paper.

The Circles of Context Model

The following visual schematic represents a single model for all forms of communication. It is not necessarily the best, nor the most elegant, but one which aids in conceptualizing basic trends in scholarship or criticism on spoken, print, film, or electronic communication.

Figure 1: Circles of Context Model



This model is based on the Shannon-Weaver SMCR information theory model, as adapted by discourse theorists Winterowd, Kinneavy and Jakobson, and the situational approach to the aims of discourse as developed by James Kinneavy in (A Theory of Discourse, W.W. Norton, New York and London, 1980, and in "The Relation of the Whole to the Part in Interpretation Theory and in the Composing Process," in Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition, Donald McQuade, ed. (Akron, Ohio: Language and Style Publishers, 1977).

Components of Model

Contextual Circles:

Universal context refers to the physical and biological context of all human communication systems, as well as what all human communication systems have in common. Fields that address universal context are depth psychology, sociobiology,⁵ and cultural philosophy (universal context is addressed in particular in the work of Hegel, Droyzen, and Gadamer).⁶ In media studies, cross-cultural studies sometimes address this context, for example, Paul Ekman's study of responses to facial expressions in different cultures, or Tamar Liebes' and Elihu Katz's study of how different cultural groups in Israel negotiate the meaning of "Dallas."⁷

Cultural context concerns "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"--Tylor's definition of culture in 1871, which despite much debate in cultural studies still holds.

Situational context refers to the specific situation of the encoder at the specific time and place the message is encoded; to the situation of the decoder at the time and place it is decoded; and to the situation of the referent as it is constituted in the world and in the minds of encoder and decoder at critical moments of communication. Among contemporary rhetoricians Lloyd Bitzer stands out for his eloquent exposition of the importance of situational context, but, as Kinneavy reminds us, the emphasis on situation has a long lineage.¹⁰

Production context refers specifically to the arena in which the text is encoded, the incorporation of code and channel, techné and technology necessary to the encoder's communicative purpose. If the message is encoded in an institutional setting (a television network, for example), the institutional context is the outer perimeter of the production context.

It is important to note that the circles of context are not organized in chronological sequence. The universal context is simultaneous to the cultural, situational, and production contexts. All exist in time and change through time--the universal very slowly (at the rate of geological or biological evolution), the cultural quite slowly too, the situational and production contexts much more rapidly.

Terms and Previous Models Built Upon:

The terms encoder, code, channel, text, and decoder come from Shannon-Weaver.¹¹ They cover any act of communication, whether spoken, gestured, written, broadcast, or generated by computer.

The dyadic Shannon-Weaver model is superimposed over Kinneavy's triangle of referentiality, which is in turn superimposed over the circles of context. The terms used are compatible with those used in C.W. Morris' and Charles S. Pierce's general theory of signs, in M.H. Abrams and I.A. Richards' models of literary theory and criticism, in Roman Jakobson's structural model of communication (adapted from Karl Buhler's work in the 1930's), and to terms used in the work of a range of logicians and discourse theorists, (e.g., Carnap, Martin, Kotarbinski, Grezgorczyk, and Bar Hillel).¹²

Applying the Model to "All in the Family"

Having briefly reviewed what the circular context model is, it remains to be seen how it can be applied to practical tasks of teaching, writing, and criticism. I have chosen the television series All in the Family as a central text for this purpose for several reasons. It is a series that most people, even those who don't watch television regularly, are aware of. It was the most popular situation comedy on network television in the 1970's (ranking in the top ten for nine straight seasons), and by September, 1978, when Archie and Edith Bunker's chairs were placed on permanent display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, All in the Family had become an officially recognized American institution.

In addition, a specific body of criticism developed around the show during its nine years on the air, some of the best examples of which are collected by Richard Adler's 1979 anthology, All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal. The principal uses of the contextual model in this particular regard--in analyzing individual pieces of criticism, in reviewing bodies of criticism, and in following shifts in criticism over time--can be demonstrated by looking at writings about All in the Family over its nine-year history on the air.

Model Applied to an Individual Critical Essay

We can apply the model to Richard Adler's overview essay at the beginning of his anthology, All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal, 1979. In doing so we see how Adler addresses different contexts out of which the show emerged and weaves his understanding of those contexts into a narrative that makes sense of the show's place in television history.

Adler begins by establishing the historical context in which All in the Family first appeared in January 1971. It was a time when "the country's agony over the Vietnam War was at its height;" though troop withdrawals had begun they were "far too slow to appease the growing number of Americans opposed to the war....In November a quarter-million protesters gathered in Washington, the largest anti-war demonstration in U.S. history."¹³

Shifting quickly to the institutional context, Adler points out that network television was operating on a different order of reality from that of the society surrounding it. For the networks, Adler notes, escapism was the order of the day. "At the end of 1970, for example, the ratings were dominated by melodramas such as Ironside, Mannix, Marcus Welby, Medical Center, Gunsmoke and Bonanza" as well as comedies like Here's Lucy, Bewitched and Hee Haw.¹⁴

Then Adler focuses attention on the institutional context of CBS, his central concern in this essay. "CBS was the least likely to broadcast a program like All in the Family....The CBS formula for success was wonderfully simple: hire the biggest stars and build audience loyalty around them."¹⁵ But CBS dealt with advertisers, and by 1970 advertisers were becoming more discriminating. Adler's discussion moves to the power of demographic research in shaping decisions in a network that was conscious of its need to attract younger, more urban, and more affluent viewers.¹⁶

Adler spotlights two individuals who played key roles in bringing All in the Family to life at CBS: Robert Wood, a new CBS executive who decided to take the gamble of backing All in the Family in order to

attract new audiences, and Norman Lear, the writer producer whose brainchild All in the Family was.

In introducing these key "actors" in the story, Adler includes a series of comments on writer-producer Norman Lear's career and the importance of his energy, determination and perseverance in clearing network hurdles and bringing the show to life. The early production history of the show is recounted as well, with special note made of the technology of shooting and editing (it was videotaped in the studio before a live audience--an innovation for the day)¹⁷ and with references to other key players in the battle that developed between Lear and his company and the standards and practices department at CBS under William Tankersley.

The strategy of this piece of television criticism by Adler is, then, to start with the broadest social/cultural context, move to the institutional context of network television, and then, still within the first nine pages of the essay, move increasingly toward the center of the circle of production. By establishing the centrality of the text to American experience in the 1970's--embellized by the placement of the Bunker chairs in the Smithsonian--Adler also establishes the importance of his subject for comment and criticism, as well as the cultural context out of which the text operated. The battles waged by Archie and Mike, Gloria and Edith do not make much sense outside this context.

Adler's moves easily between contexts--cultural, institutional, artistic and technological. The movement from general to concrete, from largest circle of context (American culture) to specific production contexts at CBS, from impersonal forces (national crisis and public uncertainty, commercial pressures, network demographics and ratings

consciousness) to personal actors in the drama of the program's acceptance (Lear, Wood, Tankersley, and star Carroll O'Connor) gives Adler's essay a feeling of scope and comprehensiveness in a remarkably succinct discussion of the program.

This is not to argue that all Adler's arguments are correct. Some of Adler's points are debatable--a closer look at the institutional context of CBS in the early 70's might challenge his assertion that simple escapism carried the day. Nor does his account go terribly deeply into any of the contexts he discusses. Joseph Turow's account of the institutional factors that enabled Lear to produce "All in the Family" at CBS in the late 1970's is much more systematic and detailed than Adler's. But Adler's argument gains credibility from his ability to look at multiple contexts.

As it develops Adler's critical strategy also follows the through-time development of the media message, corresponding to the line from encoder to decoder in the circular context model. Adler devotes time to Norman Lear's earlier career, for instance, since Lear's childhood, family life, and ideas as a writer and producer laid the groundwork for All in the Family long before he brought the idea to the network.¹⁸

Following the show through the stages of its development lends a sort of recapitulated dramatic tension to Adler's analysis of the show's rise and success. The first section, though titled "introduction," could equally be subheaded "the cultural context." From then on the subheadings of Adler's critical appraisal of All in the Family show us his narrative approach.

The Least Likely Network

The Rise of Norman Lear

CBS Decides (the preliminary stages of the battle with CBS over airing the program)

Tensions and Apprehensions (last minute problems before the show went on the air Jan. 12, 1971)

On the Air: Initial Responses (CBS takes special steps to prepare for a wave of protest when the first show aired, it never happens; critical response mixed the first year)

The Second Season (battle lines drawn over whether the show was good or bad, harmful or salutary in airing conflicts over prejudice, economic issues, and issues of war and peace)

What Research Says (summary of survey research)

The Appeal of the Series

Family's Offspring (Lear's new series and spinoffs once the show was successful)

Nine Seasons (the decision to end the series in its ninth season while it was still in the top ten, and a final retrospective comment on its success).

In the second section of the essay Adler shifts from an evocative description to a more reflective, retrospective, evaluative mode. Instead of trying to recapture the drama and immediacy of the series' impact when it first went on the air, he looks back and tries to explain the power and audience appeal of the series over its long run.

Using the contextual model as a frame of reference we see how Adler's use of two movements, from outer to inner circles of context and across the time span of the series' development, takes us systematically on what appears to be a casual journey through the history of the series. In general, the circles of context model can be helpful in examining the structure of a piece of criticism and in differentiating

between a piece of comprehensive criticism, that touches upon and examines a range of contexts, as Adler does, and a more intensive form of criticism that, like Michael Arlen's study of the "Reach Out and Touch Someone" campaign of AT and T, investigates a single context in great detail.¹⁹

Model Applied to Shifts of Focus in "All in the Family" Criticism

The contextual model can be used to survey groups of works that center on particular series, programs, or creative forces in television. In reviewing All in the Family criticism, I was able to see shifts in emphasis and issues explored over the course of the show's history. What at first appears to be a random assortment of approaches--auteur studies (Arlen, Newcomb, Adler),²⁰ ideological criticism (Himmelstein, McNulty),²¹ production ethnography (Lynch, Turow),²² iconographic code analysis (Barker, Timberg),²³ genre criticism (Himmelstein, Arlen, and Newcomb),²⁴ and audience studies (Vidmar and Rokeach, Wilhoit and de Bock, Loye and Meyer)²⁵--develops into patterns when mapped onto the contextual model as single frame of reference.

Of even more interest is the ability to see at a glance what shifts have occurred in the focus of media critics, journalists and scholarly researchers over time. Questions answered come from questions asked, and we can use the model to see shifts in the kinds of questions asked about All in the Family over the sixteen-year period since the series went on the air.

Initial responses to the series were concerned with a single question: did the show, with its focus on Archie Bunker's virulent bigotry, expose and defuse bigotry and prejudice^{or} exacerbate it. Initial critical response was in the form of charge and countercharge (one

notable exchange taking place on the pages of the New York Times between a television critic and Lear himself).²⁶ By the series' fourth season, however, survey research was brought to the question. Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach's study of viewers in the midwest and Canada led the way, but other studies followed in its wake.²⁷ In almost every instance, the emphasis was on the right side of the model: on audiences, their perceptions of the program, what part it played in their lives, values, and perceptions, what changes, if any, watching the series promoted.

Most television criticism is from the position of the viewer, whether the critic acts as consumer guide (as in a newspaper or magazine review), as interpreter of the formal qualities of the work, or as a scholar attempting to delve the fundamental meanings of television entertainment in its social and cultural context. Adler's anthology of All in the Family Criticism, though it reflects some interest in the encoding processes of television, is concerned primarily with audiences and decoding processes.

Model Applied to Larger Shifts in Media Criticism

Just as television has paralleled in interesting ways motion pictures' rise as a mass medium in the early decades of the twentieth century,³¹ cycles of television criticism, in the brief period of time television criticism has been written, have paralleled cycles in film and literary criticism.

Though diversity has characterized literary criticism from the beginning, certain patterns do emerge. M. H. Abrams has shown how traditions of literary criticism in the 19th century orient themselves in four basic directions: toward the author and process of creation, toward the audience and process of reception, toward the structure of the work itself, and toward the way the work reflects or represents the external world³²--in other words, toward the three corners and center of the semiotic triangle presented by Kinneavy and others.

Another distinguished literary critic and theorist, William K. Wimsatt, made essentially the same argument in categorizing currents in 20th century literary criticism (The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry, 1954),³³ while adding a fifth form of criticism, one that would include an acknowledgement of each of these approaches to the meaning of a literary work.

Though diverse patterns of criticism have predominated over time, certain approaches have been favored at certain times. In the 19th century, with the rise of the romantic movement and emphasis on historical biography, authorship studies came to the fore. That tradition continues today in auteur studies in film and television.

Only with the rise of New Criticism did the focus shift dramatically to the text itself. From the 1920's on the study of

literature increasingly centered on intrinsic relationships within the text. New Criticism held sway into the 1950's, and despite major incursions from other currents of criticism in the last two decades, the study of individual texts in the context of authorship still holds the predominant position in most English departments. By the end of World War II, however, a shift away from author and text had begun to occur,³⁴ though those who came along to challenge basic traditions in literary criticism were often, as Frank Lentricchia notes, still bound to them.

I dwell in detail on these shifts in the contexts of literary criticism not merely to reflect on how the world of literary criticism has changed over time (this too can be mapped on the contextual model), but because these shifts have had parallels, in briefer spans of time, in film and television criticism.

Film criticism, like literary criticism, progressed from a prescriptive form that focused on the social effects of the new medium (which many feared to be negative), to discussions of the nature of film in relation to the ideal of what it should or could be (the realist/formalist debate), to a more descriptive criticism that looked at film texts in much the same way as traditional nineteenth and twentieth century literary scholarship. In the wake of the structuralist and post-structuralist debates of the 60s, 70s, and 80s, film criticism began to devote itself to critical projects that attempted to understand the responses of those who consume (decode) film works within their cultures from both economic and phenomenological perspectives. Recent film studies, like more recent literary studies, attempt to understand film in social and cultural contexts, to discover systems of meaning

(intertextual spaces) which structure communication between filmmakers and audiences.³⁶

In general, the key word in literary, film and television studies today is "context." For the structuralist and post-structuralist critic alike, it is not sufficient to analyze a film, poem or novel by itself, to examine the artistry of its mechanism or trace the origins of the craft traditions that go into its making. An awareness of the larger array of contextual circles and the realization of their complexity and interconnectedness leads to a larger series of questions.

When we return to our own survey of television criticism--articles and books that respond to All in the Family--we see a progression of critical stances that curiously echoes the historical progressions of film and literary criticism.

Early responses to All in the Family were sharply prescriptive and dealt with affects on audience. The debate concerning audience effects raged on, as we have noted, through the first years of the show. Audience research then attempted to establish more objective criteria to guide the debate.

Over time, as in the move toward more scientific, descriptive practices in film and literary criticism, more descriptive forms of criticism emerged. One approach, to All in the Family, conditioned by previous models of film and literary criticism, focused on writer-producer Norman Lear as "author"--Lear's background and history and the germination of the idea of All in the Family show from previous life and writing/producing experiences. Auteur criticism privileges one aspect of production context and explores it in depth. Other areas--organizational or institutional constraints on production, for

example, or conditions of production on the studio floor--are mentioned only in passing or not at all.

Another type of criticism that came to the fore, influenced by genre criticism and myth and archetype studies in literature and film, attempted to understand the text as part of a larger group of texts (situation comedies) within a particular cultural context, the larger structures of meaning in which the program was made and viewed.³⁷

Edward McNulty's "The Gospel According to Edith Bunker," published in the show's fourth season used, a theological paradigm to highlight the morality play aspects of All in the Family. McNulty focused on Edith's role as an embodiment of Christian values of peace-keeping and love.³⁸ As the run of the show continued there were instances of a kind of impressionistic audience ethnography (journalists who went out and talked to viewers in their houses, interviewing families who like the Bunkers lived in Queens), and articles on production technique and production history.³⁹ In general, as in film and literary criticism, the perspective changed from moral and prescriptive (why this was a show that was good or bad for audiences) to a more detailed, empirical view of the complex roles of producer (encoder) and viewer (decoder). Thus, the shifts that have occurred in the small body of All in the Family criticism parallel larger shifts in literary and film criticism.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages I have shown ways in which the contextual model can be used to describe individual works of criticism, bodies of criticism, and shifts in criticism, whether that criticism focuses on print, film, or the electronic media.

It is a rhetorical model that attempts to situate a communicative act in a specific time and place, but it can be used to describe acts of interpretation that come long after the original encoding. The model can thus be adapted to the discussion of "autonomous texts" (texts that travel through time) as Ricoeur calls them,⁴¹ but such adaptations must take into account changes in situational and cultural context that occur between historical moments of encoding and decoding.

Despite its focus on single texts and its reduction to a static, abstract form, the model recognizes the fundamental social processes of which the message is a part and addresses the problems raised by Carey, Schwartz, Watzlawick and others in their critique of the 19th-century based "transportation model" of communications.⁴²

While an individual message does go from one discrete source to another, and does travel a certain distance (whether at the speed of a foot messenger or the speed of light), the linear transportation model is clearly inadequate to reflect the interactive or ritual aspects of modern communication. The contextual model reaffirms that all communication takes place in the center of political, cultural and social processes.

I find the contextual model particularly useful in discussing and thinking about genres of media criticism and media studies scholarship. Using the contextual model and arrows to show the major concerns of the

textual critic, one can show in what direction the text is being explored: in relation to its own syntactics, in relationship to the economics of its production, in relation to the ways in which readers or viewers encounter the text. Media studies influenced by sociological or anthropological models, for instance, focus on the pragmatics of media use by image-consuming publics on the decoder side of the circle.

Finally, using this model enables beginning and advanced students to see communication studies as a common endeavor. The area of scholarly interest, the evidence examined and methods of research used may be dissimilar, but scholars who engage in media studies examine the same fundamental communication questions. Whether humanistic, literary or social scientific in orientation, qualitative or quantitative, all forms of media study endeavors to understand how people communicate with each other through structures of symbolic experience.

Footnotes

1. Denis McQuail and Sven Windahl, Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communications (Longman: London and New York, 1981), p. 8.

2. Ibid.

3. Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication (Urbana, Illinois: The University of Illinois Press, 1949). The book had gone through seven printings by 1959. It contains the mathematical basis of the information model by Shannon, originally published in two installments in July and October of 1948, as well as a more general elaboration of the theory by Weaver, originally published in Scientific American, July, 1949.

McQuail and Windahl review twenty-seven different mass communication models, most of which assume the Shannon and Weaver model as a starting point.

The most sophisticated general model, however, and one which recognises the fundamental social contextual nature of human communication is that developed by Stuart Hall of the Centre for Cultural Studies in Birmingham, England. Described in some detail in his landmark monograph, "Encoding/Decoding," Hall's model has served as a highly useful framework for the sophisticated social analysis and media studies of scores of scholars at the Centre and those influenced by their work. "Encoding/Decoding" is reprinted in Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79, edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980).

4. Many, though not all, of the items of criticism reviewed are found reprinted in Richard P. Adler, ed. All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal (New York: Praeger, 1979).

5. See, for instance, Philip Kitcher's review of the literature in sociobiology, Sociobiology and the Quest for Human Nature (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1985).

6. H. G. Gadamer et al., cited in James Kinneavy, "The Relation of the Whole to the Part in Interpretation Theory and in the Composing Process," in Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition, Donald McQuade, ed. (Akron, Ohio: Language and State Publishers, 1977), p. 6. See also Jurgen Habermas "What Is Universal Pragmatics," the first chapter of Communication and the Evolution of Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), pp. 1-68.

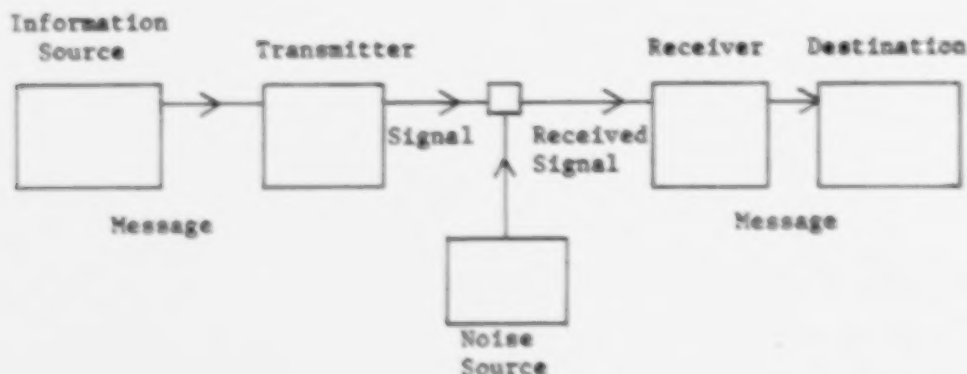
7. Tamar Liebes, "Ethnocriticism: Israelis of Moroccan Ethnicity Negotiate the Meaning Of Dallas," Studies in Visual Communication 1984, and Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes, "Once Upon A Time in Dallas," Intermedia 12:3, May 1984, 28-32.

8. Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn. Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions (New York: Vintage Books, 19), pp. 355-356. Tylor's basic definition of culture, first enunciated in print in 1871 in Primitive Culture, quoted in Kroeber and Kluckhohn, p. 80.

9. Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric I (1968), 1-14; Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method (New York, MacMillan Company, 1965).

10. James L. Kinneavy, "The Relation of the Whole to the Part in Interpretation Theory and in the Composing Process," in Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition, Donald McQuade, ed. (Akron, Ohio: Language and State Publishers, 1977), 1-23.

11. The original diagram for the Shannon-Weaver model, published in 1949, is:



(From Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication, p. 98).

12. For a discussion of the correspondences between basic communication models, see James L. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1971), pp. 18-19, 58-59.

13. Richard P. Adler, All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal (New York: Praeger, 1979), p. xv.

14. Ibid., p. xvi.

15. Ibid., p. xvii.

16. Ibid., pp. xvii-xviii.

17. The synchronized 3-camera set-up had been popularized by Lucille Ball in the "I Love Lucy" show some thirty years before--but it was Norman Lear who took the basic 3-camera shooting style and made it work with video cameras and monitors in continuous real-time performance.

18. As one indication of his eagerness to act on this idea, Lear moved to acquire the rights to Till Death Do Us Part, the British series upon which All in the Family is based, on the basis of a review in Variety before he had a chance to see a single episode of the series. (Adler, b. xix.)

19. Michael Arlen, Thirty Seconds (New York: Penguin, 1981).

20. Michael Arlen, "The Media Dramas of Norman Lear," published originally in the New Yorker, May 10, 1975, and reprinted in Adler. Horace Newcomb, chapter on situation comedy, TV: The Most Popular Art (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1974), and an earlier essay in Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies 2, Jack Salzman, ed., "The Television Artistry of Norman Lear."

21. Hal Himmelstein, Television Myth and the American Mind (New York: Praeger, 1984), "Television's Social Comedies," pp. 121-131. Edward McNulty, "The Gospel According to Edith Bunker," published originally in Christian Century March 27, 1974, and reprinted in Adler.

22. James E. Lynch, "Seven Days with 'All in the Family': Case Study of the Taped TV Drama," originally published in Journal of Broadcasting August 9-16, 1973, reprinted in Adler. Joseph Turow, "Unconventional Programs on Commercial Television: An Organizational Perspective," in Individuals in Mass Media Organizations: Creativity and Constraint, James S. Ettema and D. Charles Whitney, eds. (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1982).

23. David Barker, "The Meaning of Production Techniques in Commercial Television: All in the Family and M*A*S*H," an unpublished manuscript (forthcoming in Critical Studies in Mass Communication); Bernard Timberg, "The Ephiphanal Moment in Situation Comedy," an unpublished paper.

24. Works cited above.

25. All of these studies, which took place pre-1979, are cited in Adler.

26. The exchange between Laura Z. Hobson ("As I Listened to Archie say 'Hebe'...", in the New York Times, September 12, 1971) and Lear ("As I Read How Laura Saw Archie") is included in Adler in its entirety.

27. Adler, All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal. pp. xxix-xxxiii for overview of research, and Section IV, "Research Reports," for detailed accounts of studies.

28. Crawford Wood, "Bunkerism," published originally in the New Republic, December 22, 1973, reprinted in Adler.

29. Adler, p. xxii.

30. See, for instance James S. Ettema and D. Charles Whitney's anthology of essays in Individuals in Mass Media Organizations: Creativity and Constraint (1982), Todd Gitlin's Inside Primetime (1983), Gaye Tuchman's Making News (1978), Horace Newcomb and Robert Alley's The Producer's Medium (1983), and the work of Paul Hirsch and Richard Peterson in the sociology mass of media organizations.

31. See Robert Davis' study of state censorship boards in the first two decades of film activity which parallels quite closely the activity of moral majority and other interest groups to "clean up" television.

32.. M.H. Abrams. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.

33. William K. Wimsatt. The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954.

34. See William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History vol. 2 (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1967), p. 734, 737-738. Wimsatt and Brooks discuss the ways in which critical thought moved in the 1950's from an interest in author to an interest in audience. They see post-1950's criticism (Northrup Frye's myth and archetype school of criticism is the immediate referent here) as a "horizontal or folkways alignment, out of a 'socio-real' tradition, rather than the vertical and aristocratic alignment of neoclassicism," and add that

one of the main lessons of critical history would seem, indeed, to be that the stress of literary theory must fall on the experience (subjective and emotive) rather than on the what, the object of value so far as that is outside any experiencing subject. Yet, for reasons we have been sketching, this lesson need not be interpreted as relegating the values of poetry to the realm of the whimsical and undebatable.

Taking their cue from Plato's Ion and his discussion of the rhapsode through whom poetic inspiration is expressed, Wimsatt and Brooks offer the following metaphor for literary experience.

A refraction of light through a crystal tells something about the light, about the crystal; the refraction itself is a kind of reality, interesting to observe. Let us say that poetry is a kind of reality refracted through subjective responses. This refraction itself is an area of reality. Does the refraction tell us something unique and profound about the reality beyond itself? We need not actually say much about this for the purposes of workable poetics.

35. Though Jonathan Culler's Structural Poetics (1975) announced a major shift from interest in author and author's intention to interest in reader and readings of the text, from individual texts to systems of texts, Culler too, as Lentricchia points out, still had one foot planted in established views of literary criticism. This is what Lentricchia has to say about the two levels of critical consciousness within which Culler is operating:

Two rigorous structuralist principles--(1) that the self is an intersubjective construct formed by cultural systems over which the individual person has no control; and (2) that the text is a kind of formless space whose shape is imposed by structured modes of reading--are compromised seriously by Culler...and in both instances in traditionalist ways. Culler has not cut himself free of attitudes 1) that the individual self at its higher pitches of self-consciousness can cut itself free of cultural determination; and 2) that the properties that distinguish types of discourse inhere in discourse itself as ontological substrata."
(Lentricchia, After New Criticism, p. 108.)

36. Perhaps the most readable discussion of the evolution of film theory and criticism can be found in James Monaco, How To Read A Film: The Art, Technology, Language, History and Theory of Film and Media (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 293-325.

37. Horace Newcomb, TV: The Most Popular Art (1974) and Hal Himmelstein, Television Myth and the American Mind (1984), are key works in this regard.

38. McNulty, "The Gospel According to Edith Bunker" (1974), reprinted in Adler.

39. The only example in Adler is, as noted before, James E. Lynch's "Seven Days with 'All in the Family': Case Study of the Taped TV Drama" (1973).

40. This diagram was presented originally at the University of Iowa Symposium and Conference on Television Criticism, April 26, 1985.

41. Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distinction," in Hermeneutics and Human Sciences, John B. Thompson, ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 139.

42. James Carey's is in many ways the most general formulation of this critique, and I therefore quote it at length:

A ritual view of communication is not directed toward the extension of messages in space but the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but representation of shared beliefs.

If the archetypal case of communication under a transmission view is the extension of messages across geography for the purpose of control, the archetypal case under a ritual view is the sacred ceremony which draws persons together in fellowship and commonality.

While this view has also been shorn of its explicitly religious origins, it also has never completely escaped its metaphoric root...This project of community ideals and their embodiment in material form--dance, plays, architecture, news stories, strings of speech--creates an artificial though nonetheless real symbolic order which operates not to provide information but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process.

(James Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," Communication 1975, vol. 2, pp. 1-22.)